

DIVISION III

COMMENCEMENT OF ACTIONS

Rule 1.301 Commencement of actions; tolling; cover sheet.

1.301(1) For all purposes, a civil action is commenced by filing a petition with the court. The date of filing shall determine whether an action has been commenced within the time allowed by statutes for limitation of actions, even though the limitation may inhere in the statute creating the remedy.

1.301(2) A cover sheet available from the clerk of court or from the judicial branch web site (www.judicial.state.ia.us) must be completed and accompany every civil petition except in small claims, probate, and mental health commitment actions. This requirement is solely for administrative purposes, and matters appearing on the civil cover sheet have no legal effect in the action. The clerk may assist pro se litigants in completing the cover sheet. The cover sheet may be modified from time to time as deemed necessary by the supreme court. [Report 1943; amendment 1975; October 31, 1997, effective January 24, 1998; December 21, 1999, effective February 1, 2000; October 18, 2000, effective January 2, 2001; November 9, 2001, effective February 15, 2002]

Rule 1.302 Original notice; form, issuance and service. A notice to the defendant, respondent, or other party against whom an action has been filed shall be served in the form and manner provided by this rule. This notice shall be called the original notice.

1.302(1) The original notice shall contain the following information:

- a. The name of the court and the names of the parties.
- b. The name, address, telephone number, and if available, the facsimile transmission number of the plaintiff's or petitioner's attorney, if any, otherwise the plaintiff's or petitioner's address.
- c. The date of the filing of the petition.
- d. The time within which these rules or statutes require the defendant, respondent, or other party to serve, and within a reasonable time thereafter file, a motion or answer.

The original notice shall also state that if the defendant, respondent or other party fails to move or answer, judgment by default may be rendered for the relief demanded in the petition. The original notice shall also include the compliance notice required by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). A copy of the petition shall be attached to the original notice except when service is by publication. If service is by publication, the original notice alone shall be published and shall also contain a general statement of the claim or claims and, subject to the limitation in rule 1.403(1), the relief demanded.

1.302(2) The original notice shall be signed by the clerk and be under the seal of the court.

1.302(3) An original notice shall be served with a copy of the petition. The plaintiff is responsible for service of an original notice and petition within the time allowed under rule 1.302(5) and shall furnish the person effecting service with the necessary copies of the original notice and petition. This rule does not apply to small claims actions.

1.302(4) Original notices may be served by any person who is neither a party nor the attorney for a party to the action. A party or party's agent or attorney may take an acknowledgment of service and deliver a copy of the original notice in connection therewith and may mail a copy of the original notice when mailing is required or permitted under any rule or statute.

1.302(5) If service of the original notice is not made upon the defendant, respondent, or other party to be served within 90 days after filing the petition, the court, upon motion or its own initiative after notice to the party filing the petition, shall dismiss the action without prejudice as to that defendant, respondent, or other party to be served or direct an alternate time or manner of service. If the party filing the papers shows good cause for the failure of service, the court shall extend the time for service for an appropriate period. [Report October 31, 1997, effective January 24, 1998; November 9, 2001, effective February 15, 2002; November 22, 2002, effective February 1, 2003]

COMMENT: Rule 1.302 is a combination of former Iowa Rs. Civ. P. 49, 50 and 52 reorganized to present the information in a more logical sequence. This rule was changed to reflect the present practice. Original notices should now include the telephone number and facsimile transmission number of the party's attorney requesting the issuance of an original notice. It also requires the original notice to have the proper ADA notice. The language is changed stating a default "may be rendered" rather than "will be rendered." This change reflects the actual practice and the 10-day notice before a default judgment can be entered. The rule also has a 90-day requirement for service. Ninety days was chosen in order that service would be perfected prior to the issuance of scheduling orders by most courts. The forms of the original notices contained in the appendix are changed accordingly.

Rule 1.303 Time for motion or answer to petition.

1.303(1) Unless otherwise provided, the defendant, respondent, or other party shall serve, and within a reasonable time thereafter file, a motion or answer within 20 days after the service of the original notice and petition upon such party.

1.303(2) Any statute of Iowa which specifically requires response by a particular party, or in a particular action, within a specified time, shall govern the time for serving, and within a reasonable time thereafter filing, a motion or answer in such cases.

1.303(3) A defendant, respondent, or other party served in a manner prescribed by an order of court shall serve, and within a reasonable time thereafter file, a motion or answer on or before the date fixed.